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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8328th meeting of the Security Council, held on 10 August 2018, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Central African region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) (S/2018/521) and welcomes the briefing on 13 June 2018 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr Francois Louncény Fall.

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions 2349 (2017) and 2387 (2017), as well as its presidential statements S/PRST/2015/12 and S/PRST/2018/14.

"The Security Council recalls the important work of the Special Representative and UNOCA carried out over the past three years as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/521). In particular, the Security Council acknowledges UNOCA's role in promoting inclusive political dialogue in Chad, Cameroon, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and Principe, in encouraging stability in the region, and in preventing or mitigating election-related crises.

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the grave security situation and related violations and abuses of human rights in parts of Central Africa, in particular the continuing terrorist activities of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in the Lake Chad Basin, the persistent violence perpetrated by armed groups in the Central African Republic (CAR), the ongoing violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the worrying increase in violence in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon. The Council expresses its continuing concern regarding maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the illegal wildlife trade and transnational organised crime, including the threat of mercenary activities. The Security Council expresses its ongoing concern at continuing tensions linked to disputed electoral processes, social and economic difficulties, and conflicts between farmers and herders.

"The Security Council welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA dated 7 June 2018. In particular, the Council notes the recommendation that the mandate of UNOCA be extended for another three years, from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2021. The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review regarding the scope of UNOCA's mandate and activities and present

recommendations for areas of improvement, including the coherence of UN activities in countries under UNOCA's mandate, or new or refocused priorities, to the Security Council by 1 August 2019. The Security Council expresses its intention to consider these recommendations, including any proposed changes to the mandate, by 31 August 2019.

"The Security Council notes that UNOCA's priorities will include: to perform good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General; to assist the countries of the sub-region in consolidating peace and resolving tensions from the various elections that took place in the period from 2015–2018, and to assist countries facing institutional crises related to electoral processes; to work with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and its member states to lay the groundwork for the structural prevention of election-related violence; to enhance the capacities of the ECCAS secretariat in conflict prevention, early warning, women peace and security, mediation and other areas, including through continuing to conduct joint assessments and visits with ECCAS; and to work closely with UNOWAS to address transregional issues such as maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, conflict between farmers and herders, and combatting Boko Haram.

"The Security Council encourages further cooperation, mutual prioritisation and clear division of tasks between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), and other United Nations missions in the region, the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and the Special Envoy on the situation in Burundi, in order to avoid duplication and ensure a coherent and streamlined approach to United Nations activity in the region, and with a view to strengthening regional and sub-regional organisations to address cross-border threats, and commends the engagement of UNOCA with, and assistance to, subregional and regional organisations in order to promote peace and stability in Central Africa.

"The Security Council emphasises the important role of women in prevention, mediation and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding and in post-conflict situations, as recognised in relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2242 (2015), and encourages UNOCA to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue in its activities and to continue to support ECCAS in its adoption and implementation of the Regional Action Plan for implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

"The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of the Central Africa Region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, continues to stress the need for long-term strategies by governments and the United Nations, based on risk assessments, to support stabilisation and build resilience, and further requests that such information be taken into consideration by UNOCA in its activities.

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern regarding the persistent violence perpetrated by armed groups in the CAR, against civilians, United Nations peacekeepers, and humanitarian workers, and at violations of international humanitarian law and abuses and violations of human rights, including those committed against children and those involving sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. The Security Council also strongly condemns the rise of incitement to ethnic and religious hatred and violence as well as

manipulated hostility towards MINUSCA and other international actors. The Security Council urges armed groups to cease all forms of violence and destabilising activities, lay down their arms immediately and unconditionally, and engage constructively in the peace process. The Security Council reiterates its demand that all parties allow and facilitate the full, safe, immediate and unhindered access for the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. The Security Council further reiterates the urgent and imperative need to hold accountable those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights.

"The Council encourages SRSG Fall and UNOCA to continue to support MINUSCA, and increase regional efforts to advance the peace and reconciliation process in the CAR through the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and its road map that was adopted in Libreville on 17 July 2017, which both constitute the main framework for a political solution in the CAR.

"The Security Council remains concerned at the security and humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin region. The Security Council strongly condemns all terrorist attacks carried out in the region, including those perpetrated by Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh). These attacks have caused large-scale and devastating loss of life, have had a devastating humanitarian impact including through the displacement of a large number of civilians in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, and represent a threat to the stability and peace of West and Central Africa. The Council notes with particular concern the continuing use by Boko Haram of women and girls as suicide bombers, which has created an atmosphere of suspicion towards them and made them targets of harassment and stigmatisation in affected communities, and of arbitrary arrests by security forces. The Council emphasises the need for affected States to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including by addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, in accordance with obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council welcomes the support provided by UNOCA and UNOWAS for the development of a joint regional strategy to address the root causes of the Lake Chad Basin crisis through regular contact with regional leaders. The Security Council encourages partners to increase security assistance to Lake Chad Basin Commission countries, and humanitarian and development support across the region for those affected by Boko Haram activities.

"The Security Council expresses its concern that the Lords' Resistance Army (LRA) continues to pose a security risk to civilians, particularly in CAR and DRC, and notes the importance of continued regional and international support for the African Union Regional Task Force's operations, in particular in supporting repatriation, rehabilitation and stabilisation initiatives.

"The Security Council takes note of planned elections across the region in the upcoming period of UNOCA's mandate and emphasises the need for national stakeholders to work together to facilitate the timely preparation for, and the holding of, peaceful, transparent and credible elections. It urges them to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and to support the full, equal and effective participation of women, including with a view to increasing the number of women appointed to senior government positions, in accordance with their respective constitutions and national, regional and global commitments,

and in line with resolution 1325 (2000). The Security Council welcomes UNOCA's ongoing support to States of the region in this regard.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the link between illicit trafficking in wildlife and natural resources and financing of armed groups in the subregion, including the LRA and Boko Haram, and, in this regard, encourages UNOCA to continue to support the development of a coherent and concerted subregional approach to address this disturbing phenomenon.

"The Security Council recalls that the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition continue to pose threats to international peace and security, cause significant loss of life and contribute to instability and security in Central Africa, and, in this regard, encourages UNOCA to continue to contribute, in its capacity as the Secretariat for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, to countering this threat and calls for sustainable assistance by international and bilateral donors. The Security Council commends UNOCA's support for regional anti-piracy efforts, in cooperation with UNOWAS, the member States of ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, to address maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. The Council encourages UNOCA to continue to work with UNOWAS, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission to support the full operationalisation of the Yaoundé process architecture for safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly the Interregional Coordination Centre.

"The Security Council expresses its concern about the threat of mercenary activities in the region linked to transnational organised crime and encourages UNOCA to support ECCAS in the development of its subregional strategy to fight such activities which include trafficking in persons, arms, drugs and natural resources, and the smuggling of migrants.

"The Security Council expresses grave concern at the devastating humanitarian consequences of ongoing violence and conflict in the region, including food insecurity, health emergencies and the threat of epidemics, sexual and gender-based violence, and increased numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees. The Security Council expresses its concern that violence and insecurity hinders an effective humanitarian response, and recalls its intention to mandate United Nations peacekeeping and other relevant missions, where appropriate, to assist in creating conditions conducive to safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian assistance. The Security Council calls upon international donors to make up funding shortfalls for humanitarian operations.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to provide a written report to it on the situation in Central Africa and UNOCA's activities, including on the situation in the Lake Chad region as requested in resolution 2349 (2017), by 30 November 2018 and every six months thereafter."